



KAUSAR NIAZI

Study of History

SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
KASHMIRI BAZAR LAHORE (PAKISTAN)

STUDY OF HISTORY

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MAULANA KAUSAR NIAZI



SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
KASHMIRI BAZAR LAHORE (Pakistan)

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Prologue

A few months ago, I was invited as the chief guest by the Historical Society of Government College, Lahore. On this occasion I delivered a long speech relevant to the subject of History, its evolution and its Qur'ānic concept which was tape-recorded by some friends.

I am aware of my intellectual shortcomings. I was never under any illusion about the level of my scholarship. But on that day I felt that in this speech sufficient material for study had been collected. Afterwards many of my listeners vigorously insisted that it should be published in book form. Therefore after revision and a few additions, this speech is being presented in the form of a booklet to the readers, although in some places it still bears the marks of oratory.

Two points in this booklet invite particular attention from scholars. One is, whether some two to four hundred years ago, history was limited to a few stories, fables and surmises, as some reputed British scholars claim. The second is the Qur'ān's concept of history.

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I do not claim that my speech is the last word on this subject. It will disclose a few hidden aspects of historical thought. Now it is the duty of research scholars to proceed further on these lines and unfurl the standard of Oriental and Islamic conceptions of religion and wisdom in the world of scholarly research without being overawed by the West.

KAUSAR NIAZI

Islamabad

31 August 1973

Preface

It is the demand of human nature to take interest in the history of one's ancestors. On account of this interest, historians of every age have tried to record important events of their time and preserve them for future generations. It is the moral duty of the historian to give an honest and balanced outline of events in accordance with their importance. It is thus that the history of mankind since the exit of Adam from Paradise up to the present times has reached us. The most important and clear document of history handed down to us is the immortal word of God which has not only correctly recorded events but has also given us an authentic version of the false reports regarding certain events which were propagated either deliberately or due to some necessity.

Fortunately, Muslim historians turned their attention to this from the very beginning of Islam and recorded all events pertaining to every aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet, the ever-increasing progress of Islam, the wars conduct-

ed by the Holy Prophet and his emigration to Medina. This is the reason why, in spite of the efforts of the Orientalists, the message of Islam and its Prophet together with its basic principles and ethics as well as personal example of the Holy Prophet have been preserved for all time.

If a study is made on right lines and if research is conducted in a spirit of fairness and impartiality, even the hidden aspects of history can be laid bare. One point in this connection should be kept in mind and it is that special care should be given to the correctness of events and full attention be given to this research.

Before the Muslim historians came to the fore, history was only a record of the glories of monarchs and tribal chiefs or events were given an exaggerated colouring. The common people and their struggles were either entirely left out of account, or if these were mentioned, they were mentioned only for the sake of embellishment. When Islam initiated a break with this traditional method and gave importance to the common people, Muslim historians also turned their attention to this aspect of history. This is the reason why along with the description of events

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relating to caliphs and monarchs, the Muslim historians preserved also the history of the way in which common people thought and lived. In this material one can find detailed record of justice done by the rulers, their achievements and reforms as well as the full description of those personalities who fearlessly and publicly criticised the rulers for doing wrong or straying from the right path and who always devoted their efforts to keep Islamic society from taking wrong directions. This kind of historical record furnishes correct events of particular periods. As I have said above, in spite of distortions made by Orientalists and their efforts to invent false stories, the real facts could not remain hidden.

In this book only the above facts have been put forward inviting scholars to make further researches on them. Some reputed Western historians and Orientalists have tried to give the impression that history is a mere collection of myths and conjectures in which much hearsay and many cooked-up facts have been recorded. But this is not true. Therefore I have tried to show what the Islamic conception of history is, and what important part has been played in it

by the intellectual, moral and spiritual revolution effected by Islam.

As indicated in the Prologue, this booklet is based on one of my speeches which I delivered in the Government College, Lahore. I had no idea that it will be so widely acclaimed in scholarly circles, or that it would be included in the curriculum of the colleges and universities. Now, when in a short time, its two editions have been exhausted and its third edition is being presented to the public, a few additions have been made in it. Some four months ago I addressed the Pakistan National Centre, Sialkot, at its opening ceremony. The subject of my address was the part played by history in the rise and fall of nations. This speech has also been included in the booklet. The reader might find some repetitions in this part of the book, particularly where I have explained the Qur'ānic chapter on Time. But this was made necessary by the requirements of the context. This book also includes another address of mine which I delivered at a gathering of intellectuals. The main point of this speech is that the establishment of a world government is an important necessity of the

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times. My reading of history confirms me in the view that now, finally, the world will turn to this direction, and in this it will receive no guidance from any religion other than Islam.

My efforts will not be wasted and my labours will bear fruit if some researcher takes advantage of them and, with the zeal to serve Islam and in order to give a new life of peace to distressed humanity, comes forward to put forth further facts and shows to the world that Islam has covered all the stages in the search for world peace and for stamping out divisions of race, colour and nationality—an effort in which the United Nations has so far remained unsuccessful.

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Researches of Arab Historians

It is an undeniable fact that until the eighteenth century and the first and second half of the nineteenth century before the archaeologists laid the scientific foundations for research in ancient history and before they discovered from the caves different kinds of human skeletons, limbs, jaws and skulls, the sources of human history were merely those myths and stories which were recorded in the Old and New Testaments, in the Vedas, Mahabharata and the traditions handed down by the Israelite divines or the incidents which the Holy Qur'ān considered worth recording.

We do not agree with the view of the famous British scholar, H.G. Wells, that some two to four hundred years ago, human history was merely the record of myths, stories and conjectures and that in the civilised world the belief was common and it was taught that human life came into existence suddenly some four thousand

years before the birth of Christ.¹

H.G. Wells has been rated as a great research scholar. But when he said this, he limited his view to the traditions incorporated in the Old and New Testaments or he had studied only the historical literature based on the Old and New Testaments.

If he were acquainted with the Arabic language or if he had made a detailed study of the researches made by Arab historians and Arab traditionists or if he were in contact with those French and German scholars who, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, published the original works of Arab historians like Mas'ūdī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām, Ibn Ishāq, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Athīr, Abul-Fidā' and other authors and historians, he would never have claimed that history, some two to four hundred years ago, was a mere mass of myths, stories and conjectures.

It is not only H.G. Wells who errs in this fashion. Edward Knoll, Brunses, Phillip Lee, Howell and other British and American historians of their ilk argue in the same way. The reason

1. H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World* (London, Cassell & Co), p. 1.

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for this is that their knowledge, like H.G. Wells's, is confined to the researches conducted in their own immediate environment.

If their intellectual horizons were broad enough, they would not have limited their view to two to four hundred years of research. They would have extended this period to fourteen hundred years and, looking back on the past, they would have made the admission that knowledge of past human history had advanced some fourteen hundred years ago from mere conjectures and taken the road to genuine inquiry and research.

We are not saying this only as a Muslim, but as a student of history who has studied history, not merely from the first century of the Holy Prophet's emigration (to Medina), but from the time when Adam, the first ancestor of man, was created.

Certainly, the story of the creation of Adam, the first ancestor of man, has been related in the Old and New Testaments, and the Holy Qur'ān is also interested in it.

H.G. Wells and other British and American historians, because of their being Christians, are fully within their rights to consider as mere fables

the story of the creation of Adam and subsequent historical events, for the compilation of Old and New Testaments does not fulfil the conditions laid down for modern research and their authority lacks confirmation. The narrators of these books are men of unknown ancestry. Moreover, their own lives are shrouded in obscurity. The Christian and Jewish world knows very little about their third and fourth narrators, not to speak of the first and second narrators. But the Holy Qur'ān as well as the Arab historians of the first three and subsequent centuries of Hijrah fulfil all the conditions laid down by modern research. The Qur'ān which is the source and foundation of Muslim historiography certainly transcends all mere conjectures.

Not only according to Muslim scholars, but also according to world historians, it is a historical fact that every letter, every word, every dot and every verse of the Qur'ān from the beginning to the end has been transmitted to the world of today in the same order in which it was revealed twelve years before the Hijrah during the ministry of the Prophet beginning from his stay at Mecca up to the year of his death. The problem of the Qur'ān is not like the problem of

the Old and New Testaments which were compiled in book form several hundred years after David, Moses and Jesus Christ. The person to whom the Qur'ān was revealed took care to have it written and compiled as well as preserved in his lifetime.²

Our religious scholars and historians have written innumerable books on this subject and these books are quoted as authorities, not only by great German and French Orientalists, but also by British Orientalists. These books come up fully to the standards laid down for authentic history. According to them, as the Qur'ān was being revealed, the Holy Prophet had it inscribed on pieces of leather, clean bones and leaves of palm trees. In this way the Qur'ān was preserved for the future generations.³

The Prophet was not satisfied with this alone. A large body of the Prophet's Companions learnt the Qur'ān by heart. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Athīr, al-Ṭabarī, al-Bukhārī, al-Muslim, Ibn Qutaibah, al-Madā'inī and Ibn al-Nadīm, author of *Al-Fihrist*, have reported that the number of the Prophet's Companions who had memorised the words and chapters of the Qur'ān was four

2-3. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 14-15; Ibn Kathīr, V, 85.

teen hundred. According to Ibn Kathīr, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn, the number of these Companions decreased considerably in the Battle of al-Yamāmah, when fourteen hundred of them were martyred.⁴

After reporting this, al-Ṭabarī, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn al-Nadīm have narrated that when Abū Bakr and 'Umar came to know of the martyrdom of these memorisers of the Qur'ān, they felt much concerned at the thought that in the future wars, waged for the sake of Islam, all those who had memorised the Qur'ān might be killed, and these transmitters of the Qur'ān may become extinct. Therefore they set up a board of scribes headed by Zaid b. Thābit and entrusted to them all those tablets, bones and pieces of leather in which the Qur'ān had been preserved by the Holy Prophet and asked them to perform the duty of compiling the Book of God in a systematic manner.

These historians agree that after careful research and scrutiny a copy of the Holy Qur'ān was prepared by Zaid which was preserved by Abū Bakr as the most precious possession of the

4. Ibn Athīr, III, 41; Ibn Khaldūn, II, 58; Ibn Kathīr, Vol. V, account of the Battle of al-Yamāmah.

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State. After Abū Bakr's death, when 'Umar became Caliph, he had this original copy of the Qur'ān reviewed and after causing further copies of the Qur'ān to be prepared, he despatched them to different provinces of the Islamic Caliphate. Further work was done on this during the reign of the third Caliph, 'Uthmān⁵

5. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 41-44 ; Ibn Kathīr, V, 82-84.

The First Authoritative Document Of History

Our subject is not to go into the details of the labour put in the preparation of the authentic copy of the Holy Qur'ān. We want to say only that the Holy Qur'ān which is the prime mover, or the first letter, of Islamic history is a document of human history which disables H.G. Wells and other historians from saying that the knowledge of human history entered the stage of trustworthiness only two to four hundred years ago.

This science had entered the stage of trustworthiness and certainty when the Qur'ān was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad and, besides giving a perfect code of life for the well-being of human life, it partially uncovered the history of the previous ages and mentioned important facts regarding the life of many extinct nations and Prophets of yore. This narration of previous history was certainly not based on mere hearsay and conjectures.

This is the first authoritative and written document of the history of man, and this document cannot be ignored on any account. We do not fully agree with those historians' who believe that because the Holy Qur'ān has narrated stories about some past nations and some Prophets of yore, therefore it was the Qur'ān which turned the attention of such earlier Arab historians as Sha'bi, Malik, al-Madā'inī, Abū 'Uбайд, Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām, Ibn Sa'd, Wāqidī, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nisā'ī, Ibn Mājah, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Balādhurī, Ibn Athīr, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Khaldūn, Abul-Fidā', al-Suhailī, al-Kharā'itī, and other scholars towards historiography.

In our opinion, the Holy Qur'ān was certainly the first foundation [of Muslim history. It was also the prime mover in this direction, but the Arab historians and traditionists took up their work so that they may transmit the Qur'ānic teachings, personal example of the Holy Prophet and the practices of the rightly-guided Caliphs to the future generations.

However, it is true that when the great pillars of Islamic history, like Ibn Sa'd in the first volume of his world famous *Ṭabaqāt*, and after

him al-Mas'ūdī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Athīr, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Khaldūn and others began to write the history of mankind from the creation of Adam, they were inspired by those Qur'ānic narrations of the stories of the previous nations.

Particularly al-Mas'ūdī, who, according to all Orientalists and eminent German and French scholars, is the first great researcher of history, reached San'ā', Ḥaḍramaut, the valley of Ḥijāz, Egypt, Persia and India in search of the homelands of these ancient nations, and the archaeological research commenced by British, French, and German scholars in the nineteenth century, had already been completed by him in 333 Hijrah.

H.G. Wells and other British historians have studied neither al-Mas'ūdī, nor Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabarī and other Arab historians, otherwise it would have come to their knowledge that the researches commenced by Arab historians from the second century of Hijrah had laid the firm foundation of historiography.

These Arab historians, particularly Ibn Sa'd, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Athīr, have certainly, in writing the history of man-

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kind, relied upon those traditions which they received through Jew scholars, but they made a critical study of those traditions and consulted all the sources where they could get some new knowledge. This is the reason why they recorded with complete confidence all the knowledge gained by them through careful research and they wrote their histories as if they were eye-witnesses of all the incidents and events recorded by them.

This is not the occasion to go into details. As an example, we quote al-Mas'ūdī below who says :

ثم سارا اميم بن لاؤزر بن سام بن نوح عليه السلام
بعد جرهم بن قحطان فحل بارض فارس من ولد
كيومرث بن اميم بن لاؤزر ان اميم اول من ابنى البنين و
رفع الحيطان و قطع الأشجار و سقفت السقوف^١

[Then Sārah Amaim b. Lā'uzar b. Sām b. Nūḥ separated from his caravan after Jurham b. Qaḥṭān and settled in Persia. Therefore, Fars was the descendant of Kiyūmarth b. Amaim and Amaim is the person who raised walls and laid the roofs.]

Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd and Abul-Fidā' say nearly the same thing.² A little further al-Mas'ūdī

1. Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, II, 142.

2. Ibn Sa'd, I, 19; Abul-Fidā', p. 59; al-Ṭabarī, I, 105-07.

makes the claim with great confidence :

وقد ذكر جماعة من أهل التبر والأخبار أن جميع ما ذكرنا
من هذه القبائل كانوا أهل خيم وبدوية

[A party among the biographers says that the tribes which we have mentioned all lived in camps. They were bedouins and shepherds.]

Dr Satchraider is a far more eminent scholar and archaeologist than H.G. Wells. He wrote his famous book *Prehistoric Antiquities* in 1890. He belonged to the school of Grimm who was a great historian and archaeologist. Dr Satchraider says with the same confidence as Mas'ūdī : "On the whole, Grimm is of the opinion that the Indo-Europeans when they moved from Asia to Europe were still shepherds."⁴

We cannot say what is the position of Grimm and Satchraider in the eyes of H.G. Wells. But all historians recognise them as first-rate scholars and they confirm the researches made by al-Mas'ūdī, Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarī in the third century of Hijrah.

We have so far quoted only one example, otherwise the traditions which have been recog-

3. Al-Mas'ūdī, I, 144.

4. *Prehistoric Antiquities*, p. 13 ; Grimm, pp. 15, 18, 68, 69.

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nised by Ibn Sa'd, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Ṭabarī and Abul-Fidā' as authentic and in which they have placed absolute reliance have been authenticated to a large extent by scholars of history in the nineteenth century.

Undoubtedly many of their statements were based on traditions, yet they received these traditions through continuous chains of authorities and recorded them with a sense of certainty. As an example of this certainty, take the following statement of Ibn Sa'd :

"Babylon was the cradle of ancient civilisation. This was the first city which Yunāṭan, a son of Nūḥ, caused to be populated after the Deluge had ceased. Yunāṭan and his brother Sām, lived together. After Babylon was populated, Sām went to Syria and this country is named after him."⁵

With a similar certainty, al-Mas'ūdī has claimed that Yabṣar who was descended from Iram is the founder of Egypt and this fact has been confirmed by recent researches.⁶

We shall not dilate upon the subject, but we will assert that among the historical facts handed down to us by Arab historians the greatest

5. Ibn Sa'd, I, 18.

6. Al-Mas'ūdī, II, 142.

fact is the historicity of Noah and the Deluge attributed to him.

If this historical fact was a mere fable and speculation, why did this speculation recur in the oft-repeated traditions of the ancient sacred books of India and why did a scholar of the standing of Weber make the claim that Manu, the first ancestor of the Aryans, resembled Noah because in *Keith Patha Brahmana*, which is a commentary on Rigveda, a story has been related that Manu was informed by a fish that a dangerous flood was imminent for which he should prepare a baat and sit in it at the time of the flood ?

“The flood came heaving like a large serpent. Everything turned upside down. Manu made haste to sit in his boat. The flood was so strong that it touched every height and the boat of Manu climbed the highest peak of the Himalayas.”

The story related by the learned A. Weber from *Keith Patha Brahmana* recurs in Arab history with great continuity. The only difference is that in the story taken from *Keith Patha Brahmana* the central figure is that of Manu and in Arab traditions this place is occupied by Noah.

This is not the proper occasion, otherwise we would have raised the question whether or not these two persons were the same. According to Arab traditions, when the flood took a dangerous turn, Noah's boat stopped at a hill, Jūdī, and when the flood subsided, after taking rest for some time, Noah departed towards Babylon.

Nearly the same story is told in Jewish, Turkish, Kurdish and Persian fables and we think that when a story is related by so many sources with such continuity, it transcends the limits of mere speculation.

Even otherwise if the history of mankind some two to four hundred years ago is treated as a mass of conjectures, the whole edifice of the science of history will fall to the ground which Arab historians had done to elevate so much. In the period of Muslim ascendancy some of them like al-Maḡdisī, Ibn Jubāir, al-Iṣṭakhrāwī, al-Idrīsī, Ibn Qutaibah, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Farā'id, Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Bīrūnī, al-Maqrīzī and al-Yāqūt Ḥamawī had turned history into a science.

Arab Historians on Greek Philosophers

Ibn al-Nadīm, the author of *Al-Fihrist*, has claimed that it was Caliph Ma'mūn al-Rashīd and the Arab historians and Arab scholars of his age who purchased at the price of gold the lost sciences of the Greeks which lay buried in the cells of the Christian churches. This claim is absolutely true. Ma'mūn al-Rashīd sent many ships laden with gold to the coasts of Greece and Italy. The agents of Ma'mūn caused the bishops of Rome and Greece to put in one scale of the balance the moth-eaten scientific and intellectual treasures and in the other scale they put gold. Thus they brought these intellectual treasures from Greece and Rome to Baghdad and got them edited and translated into Arabic. Those who edited them and translated them into Arabic were given 80 guineas per head monthly.¹

1. Ibn al-Nadīm *Al-Fihrist*, old manuscript, pp. 16-41.

This means that in the third century of Hijrah, Muslim scholars and historians were in a position to cast into the mould of history not only their own sciences, their historical luminaries, and the main feature of their collective economic and political life, but also the findings of Greek and Roman philosophers, their scientific researches and important events regarding the life-history of their eminent men.

Perhaps this may be a news to H.G. Wells and other British and American historians, but the fact is that the researches of Arab historians extended to five hundred years before Christ. They had placed on record the ideas of Socrates, Plato and Galen and introduced them to the Arab world.

Whether the Western scholars and thinkers admit it or not, it is undeniable that it was Caliph Ma'mūn and the scholars of his age who introduced Greek philosophers to the whole world along with Greek science and philosophy. We shall not here speak about the fact that, for one thousand years, Greek philosophers were the subject of discussion in the assemblies of Muslim scholars.

Undoubtedly it can be said that Greek philosophers were not treated by Muslim scholars in the same way as they treated their own great

personalities, but this was quite natural, and this is something which is not peculiar to Muslim historians. The British, American and other Western historians of the modern period have done the same thing. We do not know of any Western historians except a few German and French historians and one or two British historians who have paid attention to personalities other than those who belong to their own nation.

Nevertheless, it is a solid fact that the writings of Arab historians are of a very high standard and they may be considered as authorities in their own field because the facts recorded in them fulfil all the requirements of authenticity.

Perhaps the British and American historians do not know that in writing history our historians exercised the same caution as they did in collecting the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. They scrutinised the contents of the material they incorporated and they themselves identified along with others the narrators through whom this material reached them. Thus they brought historiography closer to the science of Traditions. It is true that those who scrutinised *Ḥadīth* (Traditions of the Prophet) were more careful, because the subject of *Ḥadīth* was the person of the Holy

Prophet who was far above ordinary personalities, and the traditionists did not like to transmit the words and deeds of the Holy Prophet to the coming generations without exercising the utmost care.

On the basis of the caution exercised by these traditionists we can say that as far as the historical incidents relating to the time of the Prophet are concerned, no one can hazard the opinion that they were mere conjectures, because they come up to all modern scientific standards. Therefore, the history of the early period of Islam, particularly of the period relating to the Prophet and his first four successors, rests on a solid basis and is beyond any suspicion. The reason for this is that this early period of Islamic history forms the subject of our traditionists and the historians too have written on it so copiously, supported by such a continuous chain of authorities that the history of no other nation has been recorded in this manner.

Ibn al-Nadīm is a biographer of the third century of Hijrah. When he wrote his *Fihrist*, compilations regarding the early period of Islam had grown to many hundreds,² and during the

2. Ibid., pp. 11-67.

Abbasid period a stage came when thousands of books relating to the early period of Islam had been heaped up and there was scarcely a scholar who did not write something about this early period.

Like the Abbasid period, the Spanish period of Muslim history is also noted for its patronage of learning. Al-Hakam is the last caliph of the Spanish Umayyad dynasty. His library housed at least five hundred thousand manuscripts.³ Among these, books on the history of Traditions numbered fifty thousand. After al-Hakam, innumerable books on history were written. Of these we shall not speak here.

We have mentioned this only to impress upon the British and American historians that the history of fourteen hundred year of Islam is not based on mere conjectures but on solid facts. It is also a matter worth consideration that there is no dearth of writers on the history of monarchical dynasties which arose after the Caliphate. Umayyads' was the first monarchical dynasty which was established after the reign of the first four rightly-guided Caliphs. The histories written during this period come up to all standards of historical research, particularly Ibn 'Asākir's "History

3. Maqrī, *Nafḥ al-Tib*, I, 51. also II, 82.

of Damascus," of which the first four volumes have been published and the remaining sixteen volumes are preserved carefully in the Maktabat ul-Zāhiriyyah of Damascus, is a record of the history of the Umayyads which will pass thousands of tests of historical research.

Ibn Qutaibah, Ibn Jubair, Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Maqrīzī, al-Maqdisī, al-Suyūṭī, Ibn al-Jauzī, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Dīnawarī have also paid careful attention to this period in their historical writings and even our famous historians al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Athīr, Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Kathīr, while throwing a flood of light on the Muslim kingdoms of the time, have dealt with the Umayyads in great detail.

Ibn Khallikān and Abul-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, in his *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, have also given much prominence to eminent personalities of the Umayyad-period.

Al-Ṭabarī was a historian of the fourth century of Hijrah. He limited himself to his period. But he made compensation for this in his book *al-Hullat al-Ṭabarī*. And then the authentic histories of Abbasids, Buwaihids, Zangids, Ayyūbids, Saljūqs, Ottomans, Ghurids, Ghaznavids, Mughuls, Ṣafavids, Fāṭimids, Ismā'īlīs, Qārma-

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tians, even of the Slave dynasty and the family of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī form a precious non-conjectural record.

Standard of Aryan History

We would even insist that the history of the Aryan nations who spread from Babylon to Pamirs or from Hungary to the utmost confines of the world is not a history based on mere conjectures. And this is not the product of our own mind. Scholars of history and language like Max Muller, A. Weber, Satchraider, Zimmer, Robed, Sale, Raguzin, Speigle, Dapron, Herder, Harian, Grimm, Bashim, Rawlson, Sydney Smith, Gordon Child, Hunter, Woolly, Hew Kennedy, Holditch, and Baden-Powell all believed that Aryan history is authentic.

We shall beg pardon of those nineteenth-century researchers who, on the discovery of some human skulls and other limbs, trace existence of man hundreds of thousands of years ago. But majority of the scholars whom we have named above trace human life only twenty thousand years back and the stones and bricks so far discovered which throw light on human civilisation do not

carry us back any further.

H.G. Wells himself has made this claim with great confidence in his *Outline of History*.¹

According to H.G. Wells, the true age of man is eight thousand years.² According to the *Cambridge History of India* and McKrindlay, the knowledge of these eight thousand years, so far as it relates to the coming of the Aryans in India, has been transmitted to us through the sacred books of the Aryans, Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharveda, and the commentaries on Brahma, Upanishads, Satra, Mahabharata and Ramayana besides Jataka tales and Pali traditions which form the basis of the researches of the linguists.

Certainly linguists have voiced the complaint that in these books there is no mention of foreign invaders of India like Darius I, Alexander and Seleucus. In spite of this, these books give a good account of some Aryan monarchies, their beginning and decline.

One of the contributors to the *Cambridge History of India*, Dr Professor Robson, who is

1. H.G. Wells, *Outline of History* (Cassell & Co., London, 8th ed.), p. 158.

2. Ibid.

the most eminent scholar in his own field, has claimed with great confidence that the science of history begins with religious information and historical tales contained in the above-mentioned sacred books of the Aryans.

Moreover, the linguists and historians whose names we have mentioned above regard as basically authentic the Jainese and Buddhist traditions in connection with the history of pre-Buddhist India. They have also relied upon those foreign historical sources which have been recorded by Greek travellers coming to India between 484 and 431 B.C. Among these Skylax and Herodotus occupy prominent places.

The famous scholar McKrindlay treats Herodotus as the father of history. This learned Greek traveller has recorded the historical account of Pakistan, Central India, Scythia and Abyssinia. The third Greek traveller Keetes also came to this subcontinent. He belonged to the period of 398 B.C. He has given us descriptions about the reigns of Persian kings because he was associated with their courts.

In 325 B.C. Alexander of Macedonia came here. With him there were a number of Greek historians. They undertook great labour in writ-

ing the history of all these areas. One reason for this was that they had a personal aptitude for this work. But the other reason was that Alexander had ordered them to write a complete history of this land.³

McKrindlay gives more importance to the writings of Megasthenese among these historians. This historian lived for a long time in West Pakistan and observed the conditions of this part of the country. The writings of Megasthenese were first published in *Indian Antiquaries*. Then they were published personally by McKrindlay with great care.

In 240 B.C. another Greek traveller, Eratosthenese also wrote on this subject. He was basically a geographer but he considered it necessary to write history along with geography. According to McKrindlay, his statements are authoritative because he has drawn upon the diaries of his predecessors, Megasthenese and Sthene.

In this connection, Greek historians Diodoros (100 B.C.), Plutarch, Strabo, Corios, Arian and Justinus⁴ have also handed down much informa-

³ McKrindlay, *Ancient India*, p. 1 ; also Pan nikar, *Early History of India*, p. 7.

⁴ McKrindlay, tr. of Tomy, p. 18, *Ancient India*, p. 130, and pp. 9 to 17.

tion to the coming generations about these areas and have given a prominent place in their diaries to the conditions and events in this country. The books of Strabo and Arian have been published and they give us an idea of the phases through which the history of these areas was passing. Professor Robson claims that the deficiencies found in the historical documents of this period were more than made up by the above-mentioned diaries.⁵

The famous historian Vincent Smith has made it clear that if we compare the contemporary Indian writings with those of the Greek historians who came before, along with and after Alexander the Great, the latter certainly gain more in importance and worth.⁶

Professor Robson has also mentioned some of the Western historians who came to India after the death of Alexander during the period of Chandra Gupta and his successors. Robson also says that some Indian historians in this period wrote about some Persian and Greek kings and recorded the events of their own time as well as of the past period.⁷

5. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 59-60.

6. Pannikar, op. cit., p 8.

7. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 60.

Smith regards as authoritative both *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and gives also some importance to *Raj Tarangini*.

According to the author of *Buddhist India*, the writings of the Jainese authors and the Jataka tales of the Buddhists also furnish reliable information because they describe some of the events of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

We shall not, to begin with, blame the British historians. Perhaps they did not know that a great linguist Hermann Jacob has published five volumes of the *Sacred Books of India*. In this book he has incorporated extracts from all the books written on Ancient History. According to some historians, even the Pali diaries of Ceylon contain valuable historical material. They contain much information about Chandra Gupta and his successors.⁸

Professor Smith thinks that, in relation to the history of India, the five Puranas, Vaeko, Mitsa-ya, Vishnu, Brahmada and Bhagvata are very important. He states that these Puranas also contain the names of Aryan monarchical dynasties and their genealogies.⁹ Again, the diaries of those

8. Pannikar, op, cit., pp. 9-10.

9. Ibid, pp. 12-13.

Chinese travellers are also very valuable who visited India and Pakistan from time to time between the first century B.C. and sixth century A.C. Of these the first Chinese traveller who came here one hundred years before Christ was Soma-chian. The second famous Chinese traveller is Fa-hien who came here in 399 A.C. His travels have become very popular and have been published four times. The last Chinese traveller was Hieun Tsang who came here in 629 A.C. His book has been recognised as an authority on the history of Pakistan and India.¹⁰

The greatest name that occurs in this connection is that of the famous Muslim historian, al-Birūnī, who has earned rich tributes from historians. This great Muslim historian was attached to the Court of Maḥmūd of Ghaznah. He came here with Maḥmūd and after living here for many years wrote an immortal book, *Kitāb al-Hind*, on the cultural and religious life of this country. The Western scholars attach great importance to this book in relation to the conditions prevailing in India. The real fact is that *Kitāb al-Hind* was not only the best book of its own period but is also the best even for the modern period. Its

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style and method of treatment come up to the modern standards of historiography.

H.G. Wells was a great scholar and the class of scholars represented by him also consists of learned men. Yet it appears that when they claimed that the history of man two to three hundred years ago was based on uncertain and conjectural records, they should have at least kept before them this book by al-Bīrūnī. It has been published several times in the West and it has been translated into many European languages.

Everyone knows that Maḥmūd of Ghaznah belonged to the eleventh century A.C. About nine hundred years ago he made his extensive conquests. In his reign not only al-Bīrūnī but also many other authors wrote books of a high standard. Among these Anwārī and Firdausī are the most notable.

Linguistic Evidence and the Vedas

This does not end the matter. All the linguistic research done by linguists like Max Muller, Professor Bashim, Ipson, Satchraider, Weber, Grimm, Zimmer, Oldenberg, Jacquin, Gos Woold, Theobot, Macdonnel, T. Brow, and Rawlson relies on those very books which have been declared to be merely conjectural.

For example, Rigveda is the first source for the researches of the linguists and, according to some Indian scholars, Rigveda was written six thousand years before Christ.

If this claim of the Indian scholars is rejected, even then, as Professor Bashim says in his famous work, *Wonder That Was India*, the last hymns of Rigveda testify to the fact that this book had been written long before the birth of Buddha.¹

Professor Bal Ganga Dhara Tilak claims that Rigveda was written between 4500 and 2000 B.C.²

1. Bashim, *Wonder That Was India*, p. 31.

2. Tilak, *Prehistoric India*, pp. 224-323.

Professor Jacobi, Macdonnel, Theobot and Oldenberg are more careful. They think that Rigveda was written 2000 years before Christ.³

Professor Max Muller and Mr. Macdonnel, after comparing Zend Avesta and Rigveda, date Rigveda 1500 B.C. These two scholars are of opinion that the hymns of Zend Avesta and Rigveda so closely resemble each other from the linguistic point view that the hymns from one language can be easily rendered into another and even the poetic harmonies will remain unaffected.

T. Brow, who was a great expert of Sanskrit, fixes the age of Rigveda 1200 years before Christ.⁴

Dr. Winternitz is the learned linguist who dates the last period of the compilation of Rigveda as 800 B.C.⁵

Professor Bashim, a famous scholar of Sanskrit, thinks that Rigveda was written between 2000 and 1500 years before Christ. He also hazards the opinion that this book was written at a time when the Aryans had not fully conquered the North-West of India.⁶

3. Ibid.

4. T. Brow, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 12; *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 214; *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1917), p. 135.

5. Tilak, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

6. Bashim, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE AND THE VEDAS

In any case, if in the opinion of Max Muller Rigveda was written some twelve hundred years before Christ, then we arrive at the logical conclusion that the book on which the linguists rely for the cultural history of the Aryans dates back to twelve hundred years before Christ and the traditional knowledge of the history of mankind also extends back to twelve hundred years before Christ.

Rigveda, the Punjab and the Culture of Punjabi Colonists

It is not a digression that Max Muller, Weber, Muir, Hopkins, Bitchel and Gildner have made the claim about Rigveda that this book was written in the plains of the Punjab. They have argued that when Rigveda mentions all the rivers of the Punjab, it also mentions river Saraswati as a border river. In *Vedic India* a hymn of Rigveda has been reproduced which says : "Saraswati, you are more beautiful than your seven sisters, because you protect us from our enemies."¹ It should be noted that at that time Saraswati river flowed through Ruhtak in Ambala which was a border town of the Punjab.

Professor Bradley Keith, who was Professor of Sanskrit in Edinburgh University, has made the claim that among the rivers repeatedly mentioned in Rigveda the river Kabul (Kubah), river Swat (Sawistu), valley of Kabul, valley of

1. *Vedic India*, II, 192.

Swat, river Kurram, valley of Gomal and river Sindhu are very conspicuous, which shows that Rigveda was well acquainted with these rivers.

The strangest thing is that Rigveda had seen the spectacle of those rivers which flowed into the Sind river in the lower part of the Sind province and had named this confluence of rivers as the Sindhu Sea.²

Rigveda has mentioned every one of the five rivers of the Punjab. Jhelum, it calls "Vatista," Chenab "Skini," Ravi "Irāvati," Bias, it calls "Dipāk" and Sutlej "Kandri Satārdō," and it has given a full description of these rivers.³

An idea of the historical value of Rigveda can be formed by the fact that it has given full details of the battles fought between ten kings on the banks of the river Ravi. These details throw a flood of light on the mutual conflicts of the Aryans.

According to the learned scholar, Lederg, Rigveda did not merely throw light on the mutual conflict of ten kings, it also mentions the battle fought at Harappa, which was the greatest cultural centre of the Punjab, between the Aryans

2. Ibid.

3. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 79.

and the Sumerians or Dravidians settled in the Punjab. It takes pride in the fact that the Aryans defeated the people of Harappa and advanced to the sea. As we have said earlier, "sea" in the Aryan terminology meant Panj Nad.

Besides these rivers, Rigveda is very appreciative of those mountains which its authors had seen. There in a famous hymn of Rigveda in which the poet, describing the features of these mountains, says that rivers flow from them and there are great many trees there. The writers of Rigveda also knew that valuable minerals lie hidden in these mountains.⁴

The poets of Rigveda have also praised the mountain from which Chenab or Skinī flows. From this the scholars of history have derived the conclusion that the Aryans had reached the source of the river Chenab and enjoyed the natural scenes they witnessed there.

The poets of Rigveda have also praised Saja-want which was a hillock in southern Kashmir. Here the herb known as Soma was grown and the poets distilled wine from it.

Rigveda also mentions the Himalayas. The poets of Rigveda had reached the snow-clad cliffs

of this mountain. They enjoyed its forests, rivers, brooks and the whole atmosphere surrounding it. They had also experienced the thunder, lightning and torrential rains of these areas. In their poetry they dwell on these phenomena.

The famous Hincu scholar, Rangacharya, says with great confidence that the mention of rivers and mountains in Rigveda leads to the conclusion that during the period when Rigveda was written, the Aryans had occupied the Punjab, Kashmir and north-western districts.

How can we convince H.G. Wells and scholars of his ilk that Rigveda furnishes ample material about the history of our land, Pakistan, and the cultural and religious traditions as well as the religious beliefs of the Aryans who had settled here.

The learned Hew Kennedy, drawing on the authority of Rigveda, says that, according to Rigveda, the Aryans of this period believed in a simple religion of superstitions. They worshipped all those powers which influenced their life, for example, the sun, the sky, the morning light, the storms and the lightning which broke through the clouds.⁵

5. *Land of Five Rivers*, p. 32.

Professor Bradley Keith has gone into some details. He says that the Aryans of Rigveda period had turned the natural elements into idols. Among the idols set up by them, Dios, Prithvi and Varuna belonged to the earlier period. Varuna was the more sacred of the idols, and Rigveda sings its praises at many places.⁶

Like Varuna, Indira was also regarded as sacred. He caused the rain to fall, storms to blow and could be seen shining in the clouds. Rigveda contains one thousand ancient hymns. Of these five hundred sing the praises of Indira and Agni Dev.⁷

In recounting the names of some important gods mentioned in Rigveda, Professor C. Mehnan Raja has attached great importance to Aswain, Sutri, Sirya, Varuna, Ashas, Pishan, Marutas, Roda, Soma, Vishnu, and Waswaidbose.⁸ Not only this, Rigveda also throws light on the shapes of the gods. Conceptions of Hell and Paradise are also traceable in Rigveda. Rigveda also believes that the soul of man survives his death.

6. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 103.

7. *Cultural Heritage of India*, p. 24.

8. *Cultural History of India*, pp. 24-25 ; *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1907) ; Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II.

The Aryans of the Rigveda period also claim that some of their gods exist in couples. Some of them are gods and some goddesses. The Aryans also believed that if sacrifices are offered to the gods, they will show favour to the devotees. Rigveda gives full details of these sacrifices.

Mr Taylor in his book, *Primitive Culture*, has also mentioned *Suttee* while giving a description of the customs of the Rigveda Aryans. He has quoted many hymns from Rigveda which show that when some big man died, his servants, wives and other relations also killed themselves in order to join him in his travels. This has been attested by Herodotus also in his "Diary".

Professor Bradley Keith is regarded as a great scholar of Sanskrit and Rigveda. He is of opinion that Rigveda is also the greatest source for the political life of its period, because the colonists of the Rigveda period have not left behind them any cultural remains which could throw light on their alliances, hostilities and political activity. Professor Bradley Keith also says that in this respect Rigveda is the only source which every student of ancient history is obliged to make use of.⁹

We have quoted above a hymn regarding the Saraswati river from *Vedic India*. In this hymn a poet has praised the Saraswati river because it lies between the land of his own people and that of their enemies. From this, the writer of *Vedic India* has rightly concluded that Saraswati was the border of the Punjab in the period of Rigveda and, due to this river, the Aryans of this side enjoyed protection against attacks from the colonists on the other side. Neither of them could cross the river. This also shows that in those days the people could make neither bridges nor boats.

According to the author of *Vedic India*, the biggest battle mentioned by Rigveda is the battle in which ten monarchies took part. Rigveda also accounts for the causes of this battle. We shall not go into details. We will only point out that this testimony of Rigveda indicates that in the areas at that time occupied by the Aryans, there were ten monarchies. The greatest monarch was Sudas who was the head of the Bharat tribe. He belonged to the tribe of Tristo and one of his former prime ministers, Vishwamitra, had caused the tribes of Mitsya, Bakhat, Prakhtu, Bholan, Plannas, Asina, Vishni, Siva, Sevi, Aja,

Sagru and Pukhshu or their independent kings to take the field against him. Rigveda also shows that five of these tribes were hill tribes. Mitsya belonged to Chitral, Prakhtu belonged to the north-west frontier, Bholan Nalas (Bolan) belonged to Quetta and its environs, Sevi belonged to the middle region between Shorkot and Jhang, while Vishni lived in Rawalpindi and Jhelum.

Rigveda has also recounted the names of the kings of these tribes. They were Samyo, Tarwasa, Dharvev, Korsha, Poru, Ano, Bheda, Sambhra, Vakarnika and Yado. According to Rigveda, among these Poru, Yado, Tarwasa, Ano, and Dharvev were famous kings and men of great valour.

Rigveda has also informed us that this battle of ten monarchs was fought on the banks of the river Ravi. Sudas won the battle and his rivals were defeated. Twenty-one great princes were killed, among them their general Bheda. Rigveda also tells us about the number of the slain and says that sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty people were killed. It also says that the victor, Sudas, gained immense booty.

After this battle, the Bharat tribe became ascendant and the whole country from Saraswati beyond was called Bharat after its name.

Although this battle was decisive, the defeated tribes retained their independence and Sudas did not invade these regions. In fact, the Poru tribe became very powerful in the region lying between Saraswati and Sutlej.

Professor Bradley Keith has also claimed that Rigveda has even enumerated the town ships of the Poru tribes ; it has also traced the genealogy of its rulers. It interests itself in the life-story of the queen of one of its kings, Poru Kitsa. It has further thrown light on the life events of one of his successors from his childhood to his youth and related all the events leading to his political success.¹⁰

Rigveda also enumerates the tribes living between Chenab and Ravi. These were Ano, Tarwasa, Dharvev and Bell Haika. It also says that the neighbour of Dharvev was Tarwasa who was a great fighter and fought many battles against Sudas and other kings.

Rigveda attaches great importance to the colonists Sajavant, Mahavarash, Atrakoru and Madra who lived between Jhelum and Chenab. According to Rigveda, these tribes

10. *Vedic India*, p. 195; *Cambridge History of India*, I, 82.

extended their hold up to the valley of Kashmir.¹¹

Moreover, Rigveda has given prominence to the tribes of Anu, Yadu, Gandhara, Sevi, Kaikai, Verichivant and Saranjaya¹² who lived between the rivers Sind and Jhelum. Rigveda also mentions with great pride the name of a great King Asinara and says that he was the founder of Sevi State.

This great personality of Rigveda also finds mention in *Mahabharata* and Jataka tales which proves that the evidence of Rigveda is authentic to a certain extent. Further proof of this may be had in the writings of Greek diarists who declare that Sevi was the largest state in the Punjab and existed till the invasion of Alexander the Great.¹³

Another testimony which establishes the historical importance of Rigveda is that Rigveda says about the Gandhara tribe that it was settled in the region lying between the Kabul Valley, Sind Valley and Gomati river. It has also told us about Pakhtu tribe that it was a branch of the Gandhara tribe. Subsequent history has confirmed these facts and Pakhtu tribe has

11. *Vedic India*, p. 191.

12. *Mid-Indian Kushan Tribes*, p. 159.

13. Cowell, V, 55.

been declared to be the Pakhtun tribe.

The tribes of Baluchistan to which Rigveda attaches importance are Bholan and Bolnas. Although Rigveda mentions them only briefly, it has related all the geographical facts relating to them and also all their characteristics.

The historical importance of Rigveda is also apparent from the fact that it has given us so many details about the conflicts between the Aryans and the original populace of this country at the time when the Aryans entered this country and during the period of their colonisation. According to Rigveda, most of the battles fought by the Aryans were fought against Dasev who were the former colonists of this country.

We shall not go into these details. We have entered into the above discussion to show that the theory put forward by some British and American writers that the history of mankind some two to four hundred years ago was a mass of conjectures is completely untenable. All this is not mere speculation. If it were, the facts stated by Rigveda which was written some twelve hundred years before Christ would have been proved to be untrue by recent researches, but this has not happened. Again, hundreds of

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scholars of history and famous research scholars have based their researches on Rigveda and compiled a connected history of the Aryans in India which cannot be belied. If an attempt is made to belie it, it would undo the researches of about a hundred years and consign to oblivion hundreds of historical works of a high order.

Other Sources of Ancient Indian History

Rigveda is after all a book which reflects only a specific period of the past history of Pakistan. Professor Bradley Keith and Professor Jacobi and other scholars of history of their calibre are of opinion that Yajurveda, Atharveda, their commentaries and even Jataka tales are productive of useful results from the historical and cultural viewpoint and, with their help, they and other historians have compiled a connected history of the political and social life of the Aryans and other Indian nations in the period following the writing of Rigveda.

These scholars are of opinion that, according to the testimony of the above-mentioned books, the tide of Aryan emigration in this period, eight hundred years before Christ, reached the river Saraswati and their politics did not remain confined to the land of five rivers.

While discussing changes in the geographi-

cal limits of the regions peopled by the Aryans, Professor Bradley Keith has also furnished from the above-mentioned books testimonies showing that the Bharat tribe which was the hero of the third and fourth books of Rigveda had now lost its political importance and its place had been taken by the Koru tribe. The Panchals living in its neighbourhood had acquired great importance and these two tribes, in spite of being newcomers, had become very powerful.

These books also show that the vanguards of the Koru tribes had reached the rivers Saraswasti and Jamuna, but the rest of the tribe lived in the marshes of the Himalayas and the plains of the Kashmir valley. They also ruled the banks of the rivers Sind and Chenab. One of the commentaries of the above-mentioned books, *Keith Path Brahmana*, also tells us that the Panchal tribe consisted of five clans.¹

These books throw light on the invasions and conquests of Korus and Panchals. They even show that when the Koru tribe entered India, it moved towards Chitral and Gilgit.² Two kings

1. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 118; also Pannikar, *Early History of India*, p. 17.

2. *Cambridge History of India*, I, 118.

of this tribe, Parkisht and Janami Jaya, made many conquests and attained a high position.³

These books shower praises on some Panchal kings like Karivasona, Satrasha and Varmakha. About the last king, it has been said that his kingdom extended on one side to the banks of the Jamuna and, on the other, to Sibi.⁴

Jataka tales also form an important link in this connection and they furnish an element of continuity in the history of this period.⁵ The Jataka tales also reveal that when the Korus and Panchals were great political powers, the Gandhara State was also at the peak of its power, and its kings were either Nagas or Assurs, who were great rivals of the above-mentioned Aryan tribes, and their capital was Taxila.⁶

Jataka tales also tell us that the kings in this period had surrounded themselves with great splendour. They were not democratic rulers. They lived in big palaces and led a life of great luxury.⁷

After the study of many Jataka tales, the author of *Pre-Buddhist India* has formed the

3. *Ashurya India*, p. 38.

4. *Chronology of Ancient India*, p. 248.

5. *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 24.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

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opinion that the kings of this period were very tyrannical and during their reigns the people revolted on many occasions.⁸

After studying two Puranas, Taitriya Brahmana and Sathpath, Professor Bradley Keith has given us details about the powers of the royal families, their dependants and ministers as well as the administration of the government.

Baden-Powell and Hew Kennedy have, with the help of these books, thrown light in their compilations on the political, social and economic life of the Aryan colonists and their predecessors.⁹

A.B. Howell claims that the people living in the period of *Mahabharata* did not regard as sacred either the kings or their families and they sometimes deposed the kings as well as their ministers.¹⁰

This is not the occasion to go into details. Briefly, it can be said that, with the help of Rigveda, Yajurveda, their commentaries, and Jataka tales, the history of the Aryans since their entry into India till their settlement in the

8. Ibid; also *Cambridge History of India*.

9. Baden-Powell, *Land of Five Rivers*, pp. 7, 9, 72, 221.

10. A.B. Howell, *Aryan Rule in India*, pp. 24-25.

region lying between the Ganges and the Jamuna has been compiled and standard books have been written on this subject by a number of scholars, and these books form a valuable record of history.

In this connection it is also worth consideration that the information received about Jainism and Buddhism by the subsequent generation relies to some extent on the evidence furnished by the language of the stones. The monasteries built of stone reflect the teachings and history of these religions, but most of the information about these religions is derived from Jain and Buddhist traditions.

You have every right to reject traditions based on superstition. But you will have to pay respectful attention to those traditions which are of purely historical importance, otherwise the personalities of both Mahatma Mahavira and Gautama Buddha will remain shrouded in obscurity.

Perhaps it might be a matter of satisfaction that scholars like Weber, Laisbon, H.H. Wilson, Cole Brook, Princep Stevenson, E. Thomas, Carl Charpenter and Dr Hornley Hastings who have delved into Jainese and Buddhist history were

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scholars of great eminence, and their researches are mainly based on Jainese and Buddhist traditions.

These traditions are surely full of exaggeration and truth has to be sifted out of them. But out of the ashes of these stories, one can find sparks of factual truth.

The Importance of History, According to the Qur'an

Knowledge is the most valuable ornament of mankind. Our Holy Prophet says that wherever you find truth, you should not hesitate to accept it. History of whatever nation, whatever country and whatever community, whether friendly or hostile, furnishes many lessons to our younger generation.

It is history which informs us about the causes which lead to the rise and fall of nations and the mistakes committed by them. It is only history which furnishes us reports about the paths trodden by past nations, the way in which they passed their lives, the disasters faced by them and the heights to which they rose.

Which book is greater than the Qur'an in imparting wisdom and enlightenment and in guiding men to the right path. If you turn the pages of this book, you will find it repeating the stories of the misguided nation in the past, the history

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of tyrants, like Pharaohs and Hamans, and that of the 'Ād and the Thamūd, of the people of Shu'aib and Midian, of Lot's nation and of the Israelites, so that the nation and community which accepts Muḥammad as its Prophet may learn from the mistakes of the earlier nations and take the path which is straight.

It is our firm belief that the sciences existing in the world are not related to everyone except in a limited way. There is no science which relates to all the people equally, whether they are readers, teachers or students, whether attending seminaries of learning or outside these seminaries. There is only one science, the science of history, which concerns everyone in some way. There are very few people who create history, most of the people are products of history. Some are creatures of history and some want to turn the tide of history according to their own way of thinking. Otherwise everyone flows with the tide of history.

But apart from these debates about the concept and philosophy of history which come within the purview of scholars and apart from those concepts which give a materialistic interpretation of history, what we have understood from a

study of Islam and as ordinary student of the Holy Qur'ān is that history does not create itself, neither is it a blind and deaf power ; it is rather a Divine process.

What are the causes which lead to the rise and fall of nations? This is a long debate. But we think that four factors lie at the base of the rise of nations and cultures. A study of history leads to this conclusion and these factors are also traceable in the Holy Qur'ān.

The first factor is that whatever nation reaches the height of progress and leaves its imprints on the sands of time, it is necessary for it to be devotedly attached to its ideal. It must have a specific purpose in life. It must be full of determination and it must have firm convictions. It must be full of the spirit of sacrifice. The natural consequence of this conviction, purposiveness and faith is action.

If a nation claims that it has faith, but if its faith does not manifest itself in action, then its faith lacks firmness and its conviction is marked by weakness. Similarly, its ideal is not deeply rooted. That is why it does not manifest itself in action. It is impossible that one should believe in an ideal and yet one's actions do not corres-

pond to the ideal. If the foundation, that is the ideal, is there, it must give rise to the superstructure, that is action. Otherwise the whole thing becomes meaningless. Faith and conviction necessarily lead to action.

The third factor involved in the life of the nations which touches the height of greatness is that they propagate the truths which result from their faith and action. They educate the individuals who compose their nation. They equip them with knowledge and action. They fill their hearts with enthusiasm and teach them to practise their ideals. They brave all the troubles and difficulties which lie in the path of this educative process and they never stray from the right path.

The above factors enumerated by us have also been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān. In fact, what we say is based on the Qur'ānic theory of history. You will remember the famous chapter of the Qur'ān, *al-'Aṣr*, "The Time". God swears by time meaning that time is a witness. And what is time but history. What the Qur'ān means is that history is a witness. This is supported by the fact that God cannot swear by anything which is not sacred. You may also recall the *ḥadīth* (tradition) in which the Holy

Prophet said : "Do not revile time," because God says : "I am the time," "I am history." There is, therefore, no such thing as the revolution of day and night, as it is said in poetic language. In poetry this is an abusive term which means that the revolution of day and night is the source of all evils and calamities. But the fact is that the revolution of the day and night is the work of God. It is subject to His will and reflects His grand design.

After swearing by Time, God has stressed the great truth

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

that man is in total loss except such as believe and do good works and exhort one another to endurance.

Unfortunately, we have a wrong notion of endurance. The current understanding of endurance is that of helplessness and weakness. If a person is cruelly treated and he is not able to do anything, he says he has exercised endurance. If a blind man says : "I will not see," it is clear that he cannot see anything. It is not endurance that man suffers passively for lack of power. In the Qur'ānic sense endurance means resistance, firmness, determination and the will to suffer all

the troubles that one has to face in living up to one's ideal. In other words, endurance means not to abandon the straight path in spite of all difficulties. All these things are included in the meaning of endurance.

In reality, endurance is a quality which prevents man from straying from his path in spite of thousands of difficulties, troubles and adversities and which keeps him firm in his convictions and ideals. This is the lesson of history that in history only those nations rose to greatness which cultivated the qualities of patience, self-control and determination and whose activities and achievements left an indelible mark on human society. The Qur'ān has said the same thing: "Whatever benefits man stays on the earth."

This is the principle of human greatness that those nations which do beneficial works for humanity rise to the top and their existence endures, but when they do works which harm the interests of mankind, they fall a prey to decline and degeneration. This decline starts with the prosperous section of the people who are rich and wealthy, who control the sources of wealth. Their deterioration leads to an all-round

decline.

This is not our personal view. It is the Qur'ānic view of history which says that when moral standards of the influential section of people deteriorate, when they become disobedient to God and commit all kinds of sins, when they trespass the limits laid down by God and flagrantly violate the principles of Nature, the entire people fall into ruin.

The Holy Qur'ān has repeatedly said that the decline of a nation is caused by its excesses and tyrannies. You must have come across the tradition of the Holy Prophet which says that the kingdom of disbelievers may last but not the kingdom of tyrants. An oppressive regime can bring no blessings to humanity and it is the habit of God that He always causes such a regime to fall. If cruelty and oppression become the order of the day in some society, if exploitation becomes its normal practice, if there is social inequality in the society, if the wealthy and the influential take undue advantage of the weakness of the poorer sections, if the higher classes disregard the interests and rights of the lower classes, if the poor and the weak remain deprived of the basic necessities of life, then the society falls

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into disintegration and is totally ruined. Such a nation can never achieve greatness and is bound to fall into decline and extinction.

It is not we who are saying this. This is the dictum of the Holy Qur'an that if oppression and tyranny take root in a society, it is ruined.

وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

[“Nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practise inequity (tyranny)” (xxviii. 59.)]

It is not necessary that all the people in a society should practise tyranny. It is not necessary that the whole society should be a society of oppressors. If there is a small section of oppressors but no one protests against their doings, if no movement is launched against oppressors and people suffer this situation calmly, ruin and destruction overtake the society. Then both the virtuous and the evil-doers meet the same fate. Those who have committed crimes are equally punished with those who have been passive spectators of the situation.

There is another verse of the Holy Qur'an which says :

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُغِيْبُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً ۖ وَآيَاتٍ

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[“And fear tumult or oppression, which affecteth not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (are tyrannical)” (viii. 25)].

This means that when tyranny stalks the land in such a way that there is no movement against it, there is no urge to change the existing conditions and there is no organisation to face the challenge, such a society always falls a prey to decline and it can never rise to the height of progress.

When such a nation, because of its material resources, occupies some part of the earth, it loses its hold in a short period of time, because it lacks those qualities which are beneficial to mankind. Then history raises another nation in its place after destroying it. The Holy Qur’ān says that if God did not do so, the earth would become full of disorder to prevent which He brings another nation to the fore.

The words of the Holy Qur’ān are :

وَلَوْلَا دَقُّرُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِآيَاتِهِ ۖ

[“And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief” (ii. 251).]

That is why we have claimed in the foregoing pages that Islam does not regard history

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as a blind power. On the other hand, according to Islam, history proceeds in accordance with fixed principles and is subject to the Divine Will. If it sometimes plays the role of Chingiz and Halaku, that is because it punishes inefficient people who do not develop the power to ensure their own security and self-preservation.

All these phenomena of the rise and fall of nations which appear in the universe have their adequate causes. They do not exist without the design of a designer. They are subject to the will of a great power. We will also say that the modern revolutions like the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Revolution are the result of a Divine process at work in history.

This is the verdict of time, the verdict of history, and the verdict of the Divine Will and the divinely ordained destiny. God wills that the existing oppressive system should come to an end, that this order which is based on exploitation should perish and its place may be taken by an order based on justice and equity, in which people may secure with dignity all the necessities of life, and in which there may be no exploiters. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the

forces of exploitation had become very powerful and the weak creatures of God were tired of the continuous injustices of capitalism and feudalism. It was the inevitable verdict of history that the socialist movement should flourish and pull down the bases of tyrannical capitalism and feudalism.

We will also make the claim that if any nation works against this Divine destiny, God will nullify its efforts. If a people tries to stop the tide of history, if it wants to raise obstacles in the way of the historical process, if it tries to resist the current of times, it will be swept out of existence and will never rise to the heights of greatness in this world. This is the law of Nature which no power can overcome. Of course, the question still remains—when history reaches the stage where the world becomes full of justice and equity and all exploitation comes to an end, what will be the direction in which evolution would further proceed? Would all movement and evolution come to a dead end at this stage and the tide of history will be frozen? Nothing of this sort is going to happen. Mankind will advance further and will travel towards the destination which, Islam says, is the final destination of mankind, which takes man to a life beyond

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death. That will be a life in which bodily needs will be fulfilled along with spiritual needs. This stage and this period of history is bound to come.

May God enable the Muslims to meet the requirements of the times, to establish justice and equity in their own society and to abstain from blocking the path towards this goal. Then we shall be able to direct and guide the evolutionary process towards the stage from where Islam guides us to the next world.

The Role of History in the Rise and Fall of Nations

The importance of history needs no clarification. This is the master science from which all other sciences have originated and with whose help they take the road to further progress. Keeping this in mind, Iqbal, who was a great thinker not only of Pakistan but of the whole world, has said that just as memory is important in the life of the individual and if memory slackens the individual's whole life becomes meaningless, similarly, history is important in the life of a nation and if a nation loses its history, its life too becomes devoid of meaning. Therefore, the Qur'ān has laid great stress on the study of history and assigned great importance to history. Those who are devoted to the study of the Qur'ān must have come across in it the word *Āyah* (sign) whose plural is *Āyāt*. Generally, it is thought that *Āyāt* in the Qur'ān means those verses of which the Qur'ān is composed

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but those who are devoted to the Qur'ān and try to derive benefit from its study know that the word *Āyāt* in the Qur'ān has been used in four different senses. Firstly, this word has been used for the verses of which the chapters of the Qur'ān are composed and which means the commands of God, as is evident from the verse :

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ سورة قمر آية ١٥

["When to him are rehearsed Our Signs, 'Tales of the Ancients !' he cries" (lxviii. 15)].

Secondly, this word has been used for miracles shown by the Prophets, and these miracles constitute a proof that they (the Prophets) are really the representatives of God, and their message is free from all misstatements. As Moses was commanded in the verse :

إِذْ هَبْنَاكَ وَأَخَوَكَ يَا يُسُفَىٰ وَلَا تَبْيِضْ فِي ذِكْرِي ۖ سِرُّهُ آيَاتٍ

["Go, then and thy brother, with My Signs, and slacken not, either of you, keeping Me in remembrance" (xx. 42)].

Thirdly, this word denotes the signs which guide a man toward some destination, as has been said in the verse :

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾ سورة ص آية ١٩

["Verily, in this are Signs for every (soul that is) patiently constant and grateful" (xxxiv. 19)].

And fourthly, the word has been used for those evidences (of Divine presence) which exist in every corner of the universe and in one's own being, and which bear testimony to the wisdom and power of God, His oneness and His law of retribution. These are the *Āyāt* which are also called phenomena of the universe and signs of history. These are the signs which man has been asked to ponder over and about which man has been told as to how he can benefit himself by pondering over them.

"In that are Signs indeed for those who reflect" (xlv. 13):

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ سورة باقره آیت ۱۳

That is those who ponder over the phenomena of the universe and the signs of history find much that is useful in them and in these signs and phenomena. There is much in them which can enlighten and guide them in their lives.

The fact is that all these *Āyāt* (Signs) are closely interconnected and whatever nation has pondered on them and moulded its life on them has achieved total success. But if a nation has appropriated only one of these *Āyāt*, it has achieved partial success in some one department

of life, but this success is not the total success for the attainment of which man has been created and sent in this world. Take the Western nations. They pondered over one category of *Āyāt* with the result that they mastered many sciences and unravelled many mysteries of the universe. This gave them all the material comforts of life and made them the ruling power of the world. In a short time they achieved fame and power. But the Western nations ignored the *Āyāt* of history. They did not learn any lesson from history and they gave no thought to the causes which contribute to the greatness and glory of a nation or which lead to its downfall. This led to their gradual decline as we see in the history of the British Empire over which the sun once never set. However, the Communist countries gave some thought to the *Āyāt* of history and tried to some extent to learn from history with the result that the Western nations were defeated by them in the intellectual field and the Communist countries began to secure a dominant position at least in this field, although this domination is limited only to a particular class of men and it does not extend over the whole world. Thus we find that, like the Western nations, the success achieved

by the Communist nations is also partial. It does not possess the depth which is a precondition for total success. Total success can be achieved only by a nation which keeps in mind all the aspects of the Divine Signs and moulds its life according to them, because it is only thus that material life and spiritual life can be closely interrelated and only in this way there will be no vacuum in any part of life and a perfect collective life will come into existence which is necessary for the well-being of mankind.

In the sixth verse of the Qur'ānic chapter "al-Ma'ārij" fifty thousand years of human history have been likened to a single day. Now, if someone says why the consequences of the virtuous and evil deeds of a nation do not appear immediately, it is his misjudgment, or if he says why a nation is not immediately punished for its misdeeds, it is due to his ignorance of facts. Similarly, it is one's folly if one says why the virtuous deeds of a nation are not rewarded immediately. To give an example, if a person throws a stone in a pool of water, immediately the water stirs and gives rise to big waves. One who looks at it thinks that the consequence of throwing the stone has made its appearance. But if a river is in

spate or if the ocean is flowing and someone throws a stone, there is no such immediate consequence. Of course, there will be some movement in the water, but it is a different question whether it is palpable. When the consequences of the misdeeds of a nation go on accumulating, a time comes when it is given no further respite and is immediately disgraced and thrown from its high pedestal. In the chapter al-'Aṣr (Time), God has sworn by Time and made the following remarks :

وَالْعَصْرِ
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

[“By the (token of) Time (through the Ages), verily man is in loss except such as have Faith and do righteous deeds” (ciii. 1-3)].

The first condition is that man should have belief. Belief means that conviction, that complete self-satisfaction and that perfect profession which comes before action. Unless a man has absolute trust and perfect conviction he cannot achieve success. If one is disturbed by doubts, one should take it that one is spiritually dead. It is clear that this belief and this conviction can be attained only by that individual and that nation which has an ideal and which works for

a definite objective in life. If an individual is devoid of belief and conviction he cannot lead a purposeful life. He is like a camel let loose which has no destination. He does not know where he is going and why he is moving. Faith, belief and conviction are like a seed. When a seed is sown, it gives rise to a tree. Similarly, if there are faith and conviction, they bear fruit in action. If someone is devoid of faith and conviction or if his faith and conviction are not based on truth, the action to which these would lead will not produce the desired results. If any nation, any individual and any soul seeks success, it should illuminate its being with faith. Then its success will be proportional to the degree of its conviction and faith.

In connection with history, it is interesting to note that among the things by which God swears in His Book, history is one. God says: "By the Time." The word "Time" is used both for the past and the present. Generally people know that every "now" converts the future into the present and the present into the past. Here, when God swears by Time, it means, as clarified by Maulānā Sulaimān Nadvī in the translation of this verse, that Time together with the whole

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human history is a witness. That is, God says that history bears testimony and whatever claim is made by God, history has been cited as its proof. This shows that history is not a blind power. No revolution can be effected in it merely by emotional outbursts, because it is subject to the laws of God. There is a Divine law at work in history and this law does not favour anyone. Any nation, community or individual who does not observe God's laws will fall a prey to decline and degeneration :

سُئِلَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي قَدْ خَلَقَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَكِنْ يَجِدُ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا سوره فتح آیت ٢٣

[“(Such has been) the practice (approved) of Allah already in the past : no change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of Allah” (xlviii. 23)].

In other words, history is the work of God, and who can deny that there can be no contradiction between the word of God and the work of God? Therefore, the verses of the Qur'ān which are the words of God can also be said to be the signs of history which is the work of God.

It is the law of God that when a nation observes fixed principles laid down by God, it rises to the height of greatness, but when it ceases to observe them, it falls into decline. Therefore,

those nations which range themselves against the forces of history can never achieve success. For this reason it is necessary to discover those laws, to acquire their knowledge and to pattern one's life according to them, because the coynstitute the soul in the body of Time and History. You can have a look at this short chapter of the Qur'ān in which God has sworn by History. This will show you what group of nations achieve success, who are those men and which are those human groups that are seated on the throne of success. The same chapter also tells us who the people and human groups are which are thrown in the abyss of decline. As the consequences of an individual's deeds make themselves manifest, so do the consequences of the deeds of a nation. After the advent of the Holy Prophet, man's life has become short. Generally it is fifty or sixty years. Sometimes the consequences of the deeds of an individual appear in his lifetime. But in the life of nations, fifty or sixty years are as nothing. As God has said, in human history, the decisions of God are not taken according to human measurements of time. What you regard as the history of a thousand years is one day's work in the reckoning of God :

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يَذَرُ الْأُمُورَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ
مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ۝ (سورة هود آية ٦١)

["He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: In the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a day, the space whereof will be (as) thousand years of your reckoning" (xxxii. 5).]

In another place the Holy Qur'ān says : (47-23)

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ
يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ۝ (سورة ج آية ٢٣)

["Yet they ask thee to hasten on the Punishment! But Allah will not fail in His promise. Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning" (xxii. 47)].

In another place, recounting the incident of the People of the Cave, God says:

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ۝ (سورة هود آية ٩١)

["Or dost thou reflect that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were wonders among Our Signs" (xviii. 9)].

The second condition is that people should do virtuous deeds. Virtuous deeds consist in doing things in the right way. According to Maulānā Sulaimān Nadvī, faith and virtuous deeds are like the principles and figures of geometry. Faith is like the axioms without accepting which it is impossible to prove any theorem by merely

drawing the figures. But if one accepts only the axioms and does not draw figures according to them, then geometry can be of no use to us in architecture, mathematics and survey. Neither can man derive any benefits from this science such as it is intended to yield. Similarly, if a nation or community possesses faith, but it lacks in virtue or commits misdeeds, it cannot attain its goal. The whole of history is a witness that the doors of success were opened only for those nations which believed in the Divine truth and did virtuous deeds according to this belief.

Does this complete the work of man? Does this secure for him all the good things of this life and the next? The universal truth which is the Qur'ān says: "No." After these two stages, there are further two stages. If you have courage to fulfil the requirements of these two stages, well and good. Otherwise, these two stages may be of no use to you. The third stage, the third quality, the third condition is that you should exhort each other to truth. This means that the individual should not remain satisfied if he himself speaks the truth and practises justice and charity, but should exhort others also to do the same.

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He should convey the message of God to others. He should be possessed of the missionary spirit. If he has illumined his own life with the torch of faith, he should also strive to illumine the lives of others. If a nation or society lacks this spirit, it cannot avoid loss.

If the grace of God helps man, then the last stage comes. That is, "Exhort each other to endurance."

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

This means that in the pursuit of truth one should bravely face all the difficulties, injuries and losses that come in one's way, because it is in the nature of truth that its pursuit calls for sacrifice. Therefore, it is necessary for success and achievement that this fourth condition should be fulfilled. The individuals should exhort one another to be firm-hearted in treading this path. Each individual should encourage others to exercise patience and endurance under these conditions. Patience and endurance really mean manliness, firmness of heart, moral courage and determination : in other words, to live up to one's ideal in spite of difficulties and adversities. In Arabic all the words coming from the root *ṣabr* (patience) have these connotations. Thus

these four qualities are necessary for the success of individual and collective life and history is a witness to them. These four are :

- (1) Faith and conviction.
- (2) Continuous action which is the outcome of faith.
- (3) Struggle to bring faith and conviction to others.
- (4) Perseverance in this path.

Nations which have appropriated these qualities have risen to greatness, while those which have abandoned them have suffered loss and decline. Whether it is worldly life or spiritual life or both lives, in either case this process can be traced in the life of every nation. Therefore, it is necessary for us and particularly for our educated classes to cultivate these four qualities and to mould their lives according to them.

Today we are facing a critical time in the national history of Pakistan. We are still struggling to survive and to preserve the integrity of Pakistan. More than half of our territory has seceded from us and we have to preserve and reconstruct the portion of our country which still remains. All those historical factors are at work in this effort which are important for the

rise and decline of a nation.

At this juncture we should forget everything, create one nation in Pakistan and defeat all those elements which are trying to disrupt the unity of Pakistan in different garbs. If we remain negligent at this juncture and ignore the ups and downs of history, we should remember that, although Nature may overlook the misdeeds of the individual, it never forgives the misdeeds of a nation. The individual may be forgiven for his sins, because that is an affair between him and his Maker, but when a nation commits misdeeds and when a community commits blunders, it has to stand at the bar of history and no one can save it from the retaliatory action of history. What is the retaliatory action of history except the retaliation of God, because history consists of the laws framed by God.

We have often read and heard that the will of God dictates events. When a nation achieves greatness or when a nation falls into decline, the easiest way to explain it is by saying that this is the will of God. Similarly, when individuals attain fame and power, it is said that this was the will of God. Also when an individual falls from his position or into obscurity, it is said that

this is the will of God. In fact, this is also the import of the Qur'ānic verse :

وَيُخَوِّضُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيُجَلِّدُ مَن يَشَاءُ

['He exalts whomsoever He likes and He degrades and disgraces whomsoever He likes.']

Here one or two matters deserve consideration. Is there a separate will for every single event of history or is there only one will which governs each and every event in history? Because we are monotheists and we believe only in one God, therefore, we believe that there is only one will which governs all the events of history. On the other hand, if we believed in many gods and if we had taken to polytheism, we would have thought that the events occurring in the universe were governed by separate wills. Then it is our firm belief that all the events in the universe are interconnected and they represent unity and harmony so that one law of God runs through all of them as the blood runs through the body. There is only one will of God which is reflected in every event and, behind it, there is only one law which regulates it.

It can, of course, happen that, if God wills, He can favour the tyrants and cause an oppressor to prosper and flourish, because He has power

over all things. Similarly, if He wills, the cries of the oppressed may become ineffective and no revolution or change may occur as a result of their grievances. But He does not act in this manner, for although He is a ruler, He is also Wise. Of course He can do anything He likes, but He does what justice, equity and wisdom require Him to do. In connection with His will in regard to the rise and decay of nations, the important thing to note is that a society in which injustice and oppression reign can never prosper or make progress.

The question is : what is *zulm* or wrongdoing and oppression? *Zulm* (wrongdoing) means to put a thing not in its proper place. In lexicography this state is called *zulm* (wrongdoing or oppression). Therefore, the Qur'ān says that *shirk* or association of other deities with God is a great act of wrongdoing because nothing can be more improper. This forehead has been made so that man may prostrate himself before God. But when man prostrates himself before his fellow creatures, this is an act of wrongdoing and it is clear that if a thing is not in its proper place, it is a state which is the negation of justice. Thus, these hands of ours have been made to serve the weak

and help the poor. Now, if these hands are stretched against the labourers and the helpless people, this is wrongdoing or oppression, because they are being put to a wrong use. Now we have to see how oppression, injustice and tyranny take hold in a society. For this purpose we cannot ignore the conduct of the various classes. The class which starts oppression and injustice in a society has been called *mutrafīn* by the Holy Qur'ān. These are the prosperous people in a society who are men having influence and power! These are the people who oppose every healthy change and create disorder in society by indulging in luxurious and comfortable living. They are themselves wicked and spread wickedness in their society. About them the Holy Qur'ān says :

وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا الْقَوْلُ فَنَدْمَرْنَهَا تَدْمِيرًا ۝ (سورة النمل آية ٢٥)

[“When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress ; so that the word is proved true against them : then (it is) that We destroy them utterly” (xvii. 16).]

Thus all disorder in a society is caused by the prosperous and well-to-do section of the

ruined sooner or later. It is possible that the existing generation may escape destruction, but the coming generation will not escape it, because, in the life of nations, the standards of measurement are different from those of ordinary life. This is the great lesson of history furnished to us by the Holy Qur'ān.

Therefore, those who want to reform society and are anxious to change it must study history and ponder over its lessons. They should not pass lightly by the signs (*Āyāt*) of history, because a revolution does not take place merely by indulging in disruptive activities and acts of sabotage. Nor can a revolution be effected by civil commotions or slogan-mongering. If such acts create a revolution, then it is superficial and ephemeral. Such revolutions are not enduring, nor can they help to reform the society. For positively healthy revolution, a nation has to pass through many stages. It requires deep thinking and deliberation. In the attempt to create such a revolution many young men whiten their hair. Then rises the new dawn of intellectual awakening. Our young men should give deep thought to the matter and should light up the lamps of intellectual inquiry whose light may bring a new

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dawn in their society. We should study the different aspects of history, as well as the history of different civilisations, particularly the history of the rise and fall of Islamic civilisation, so that we may know what good works were performed by us as a result of which we rose to greatness, and where we faltered in consequence of which our fortunes declined. Similarly, we should try to know how we can achieve greatness today and what is that mode of social conduct by following which we can avert disaster. This is the lesson to which our Philosopher-Poet, Iqbal, has invited our attention.

One God, One Humanity

A careful study of the Holy Qur'ān makes it clear that, according to Islam, the individual is not a useless cog in this whole system of the universe. On the other hand, the Orientalists and the Western philosophers differ little from one another in their theory of the individual and society. They treat society as a body and the individual, according to them, is no more than a unit in this system. According to their theory, this cell or unit (the individual) performs a function in the body which is determined by the organism as a whole. But this theory does not accord with the basic view of Islam, according to which man is an autonomous creature in this world as far as his actions are concerned.

This theory of the individual as a cell or unit of the organism was first put forward by Spengler. Hegel put forward the same view, with a few changes, under the name "world spirit". According to Hegel, the world spirit performs a highly

important function in moulding the process of history. In Karl Marx's theory also, man is a unit of society and a helpless tool in the hands of economic forces. These economic factors and forces make or mar his destiny. Karl Marx says that forces of economic production determine the framework of society and furnish the foundation both for the individual and the society. On this foundation is raised the superstructure of law and politics. Social consciousness takes the form set by these economic factors. Thus, in material life economic processes determine the social, political and intellectual consciousness of man. According to Karl Marx, in the shaping of human personality, human conscience plays no part. Man's social personality is the determinant factor in the shaping of his individuality. Thus man is nothing more than a cog in the wheel of society.

But this view of man as a lifeless toy is opposed to the teachings of all religions. This has been pointed out by the famous Orientalist and philosopher of history, Arnold Toynbee, in his book, *Civilization on Trial*. He says:

"The view is not correct that the individual lives for society and not society for the individual, that therefore spiritual progress is of no importance in human life and that the development of social institutions is of more

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importance than the development of human individuality. If this view is taken as correct and is tested in practice, it will reveal many weaknesses."

Toynbee says that the view that the individual is a lifeless part of society may be true of insects, flies and ants, but it cannot be true of any human being.¹

From the religious viewpoint this kind of relation between the individual and society is the negation of man's relation with God Who is the only being to be worshipped. Worship of any human society or community is the direct antithesis of the worship of God.

Islam's viewpoint on this subject is very clear. Islam regards man as the best of God's creations and makes him the vicegerent of God on this earth. It says that all things in the universe have been subjugated to man and all of them are under his control.

After the determination of the individual's status in society, the historical process, according to Islam, becomes a selective process. It is a selective process because history positively helps those individuals who shape human culture on the basis of moral and spiritual values and

1. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, pp. 254-56.

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sacrifice their lives and property for this work in preference to men who are devoid of these qualities. This process also preserves those spiritual values which are of service to man. In this connection Islam does not agree with the utilitarian view of history put forward by some Western historians, because some practices may be immediately useful for a society or community, but in the long run they may prove injurious to the whole of humanity.

Keeping this view of history in mind, Islam has outlined those factors which can serve as common ground between the nations of the world and the brotherhood of man. The Qur'ān has in many places pointed to those factors which govern the rise and fall of nations, and if we ponder over them and put them into practice we can shape a better future for humanity.

The following are, in brief, the factors stressed by the Qur'ān :

- (1) When worldly material prosperity breeds self-will and leads to the violation of Divine commands.
- (2) Commercial dishonesty and dishonesty in transactions.
- (3) Absence of a positive concept of *taqwā* (piety), abandonment of the path of truth and inability or unwillingness to prevent others from doing evil.

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(4) Rise of dishonest and immoral leadership and its passive acceptance by the common people.

(5) Reign of injustice and tyranny.

All these things do not accord with Islamic conception of the creation of Man and his place in the universe. Islam does not admit that man has no control over the shaping of his destiny. On the other hand, the Islamic concept is that man is the vicegerent of God on this earth. He has been given freedom of thought and action as the vicegerent of God. Within the limits of this freedom, he can make or mar his destiny here and in the Hereafter. The Qur'ān has made it very clear that all the things created in this universe are subject to man and obedient to him, and man has been exalted over them. From this viewpoint, it seems illogical and unreasonable that when everything in the universe is subject to man, he should be deprived of the power to do anything for the betterment of his individual and collective life. Besides, God has gifted man with reason which can guide him in the right direction in all his social and other worldly affairs.

World Government

Modern scientific research, the ever-increasing inventions and technical progress have opened

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up new means of communication. The distance between different countries has shortened and the world has shrunk and come nearer. A necessary consequence of this is that the world and humanity, instead of being divided, are becoming more and more of a unity. Distances have shrunk and the different countries and nations are developing closer relations. This has created not only physical proximity but has also changed the entire way of the thinking of the nations in the world. If one part of the world suffers from one calamity, other parts of the world share in its grief. These conditions have forced a world-philosopher like Bertrand Russell and the philosopher of history, Arnold Toynbee, to call for the establishment of one world government. They have stressed the need of forming a world government on the basis of honesty, truth and faith in common values instead of dominating others by force and fraud. Arnold Toynbee writing on this subject says:

“The world is seriously thinking about the establishment of one world government which should be brought into existence by mutual goodwill and mutual treaties and in which a common language, common civilization and common mode of living may be the basis of unity. It is hoped that some international organization will furnish

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the basis of such a government. This world government which will be a federation of different nations will lay down uniform standards of moral behaviour, fundamental rights and mode of living for the different nations of the world. Thus peace and security as well as fundamental rights will be guaranteed by the world government."²

The international unity advocated by Arnold Toynbee will not be workable so long as a solution is not found to the problem of a common way of life, because even if the framework of such a world government is ready to hand, it will not be of much use to mankind unless a spiritual unity is created by effecting changes in the way of the thinking of the peoples of the world. Writing on this subject a modern philosopher, Perry, says :

"If any world-government is formed on the basis of spiritual and intellectual unity, it may be expected to endure and it may be of great benefit to mankind. But if it is established without such a basis of unity, it will not only be weak but also it will not endure. Therefore, a common religion is an essential prerequisite of such a government. There is only one truth for this period and there can be no two opinions about it. It is that man, by using his common sense, should make a

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search for this religion and the whole world should follow this religion."³

In the light of these ideas put forward by Western philosophers, if an attempt is made to examine how far Islam fulfils the requirements of a world religion, the first thing that strikes our mental eye is that Islam basically calls for world unity and the unity of mankind. Islam has given man a very high position in this universe. We have already discussed this aspect of the matter. According to the Qur'ān, God has created man in the best pattern and has appointed him His vicegerent on this earth.

Monotheism

According to Islam, a man cannot become a Muslim unless he professes by his tongue and believes in his heart that there is no deity other than God and God is the creator of the universe. Belief in one God and faith in monotheism have universal appeal, which lead to spiritual unity in the world.

Besides this, Islam makes it essential that one should believe in all the past Prophets and their Books. All those Prophets who brought the message of God to different nations were true

3. *Realm of Values*, pp. 491-92.

Prophets. Those who believe in revealed Books regard as part of the same movement all the religions and their Prophets as well as their teachings. This movement based on Divine revelations started with the beginning of creation. Islam is the last word in this chain of revealed religions, and it presents the Divine teachings in their perfect form. Therefore, this Divine message is a message of unity for the whole of mankind. This is the same message which Prophets in all the periods of history preached and it is not related to any particular class, nation or any particular period of history. It is a message addressed to the entire humanity. It has a universal appeal and it can be of great benefit to mankind, if it is made the basis of the world organisation.

Unity and Equality

Islam says that man has been created from a single soul. Therefore, all human beings, because they are descended from the same ancestor, Adam, belong fundamentally to one group which it calls *Ummah*. *Ummah* in modern terminology means "Nation". All other divisions created by man are unnatural and opposed to the Divine

will. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later). Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have settled between them” (x. 19)].

Throwing light on the creation of man and the unity of the human race, the Holy Qur'ān has called man's attention to the unity underlying the multiplicity of objects in the creation of the universe. It says that man should ponder over the fact that all the objects created between the heavens and the earth are parts of an organised system and are moving within the limits fixed for them. This organised system of heavenly bodies is called universe by us. Man does not ponder over the fact how he moves and acts according to the dictates of his Creator. His position in the universe is the same as that of the soul in the human body.

Universal Religion

We have seen that the Holy Qur'ān lays great stress on the unity of mankind and the universal nature of the religion of Islam. From this we can easily arrive at the conclusion that

Islam regards the whole world as one and the Holy Qur'ān furnishes a firm and comprehensive basis on which the edifice of a new world system can be raised. The conception of human unity and social and political equality put forward by Islam is most clear cut and no clearer conception of these things is possible. It stamps out all selfish interests, geographical divisions, racial differences and class distinctions. That is the reason why it is always possible to reawaken the Muslims, revive the glory of Islam and deliver humanity from the oppressive system full of atheistic class distinctions which at present dominates the world. Muslim unity is a positive step towards the unity and deliverance of mankind, as Toynbee has pointed out :

“The unity of the Islamic world is in a dormant condition. Nevertheless, we must be prepared for the possibility that it may be reawakened if, at any time, there is an upsurge against Western domination and a leadership comes to the top which is opposed to the West. This slogan against the West may be politically very effective in reawakening the martial spirit of Islam even though Islam may lie in a sleep as deep as that of the people of the cave. But at any time the echoes of the glorious period of Islam may be heard again. In the past Islam has been a means of deliverance for mankind on two occasions. The

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first occasion on which Eastern society revolted against Western interventionists was when, under the early successors of Prophet Muhammad, Islam liberated Syria and Egypt from a thousand years of Greek domination. The second occasion was when under the regimes of Zangid Nuruddin, Ayyubid Salahuddin and the Mamlukes Islam successfully defended itself against the attacks of the Crusaders and the Mongols. If the present world situation generates a racial war, then probably Islam will have to repeat its earlier historical role."⁴

The conception of a world government subject to the Divine Will put forward by Islam demands that we should dispel all those false impressions and fallacies about Islamic teachings which have taken deep hold over the minds of a section of the Western peoples. In the past there have been some Orientalists who have presented a distorted picture of Islam, not out of rancour and hostility, but because of their ignorance. It is a happy augury that in the second part of the twentieth century, the Western world has arrived at a better understanding of Islam. The present trend is to minimise differences in the interests of international harmony and to remove those conflicts and tensions which stand in the way of mutual understanding.

4. *Civilization on Trial*, p. 213.

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The fact cannot be gainsaid that ignorance generates many false ideas. The time has come when the peoples of the world should understand and study Islam in the way in which the Holy Qur'ān has explained it. The preservation of world peace and the reconstruction of human society depend on a right understanding of this universal religion.

It is also the duty of the Muslims to rise above sectarian quarrels and geographical barriers in presenting Islam in the perspective of the modern world situation and in preaching it to the peoples of the world. The times demand that those aspects of the great religion should be brought out clearly which have a universal appeal and which offer a solution to the problems agitating a world in search of peace and security.

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Demy 8vo., pp. xii, 232

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(Demy 8 vo., pp. xii 150)

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